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June/July 2012

State Vietnam Veterans Memorial Flag Poles Dedicated on 25th Anniversary



Veterans, Family and Community Members came together at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Capitol Campus to pay their respects to those named on the Wall and those who have passed since the Wars end.

Over 500 Motorcycles arrived with the Olympia Thunder Run and announced the beginning of the ceremony. The Run, organized by the Vietnam Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club, is an annual event which raises funds for projects that serve veterans. Riders raised

over \$2,600 to be donated to the [VA Puget Sound Fisher House](#) which serves veterans and families undergoing treatment at the VA Medical Center.

This year, on the 25th Anniversary of the Dedication of this Memorial, the flag of our Nation, our State and the iconic flag of the Vietnam War, the National League of Families POW/MIA flag were raised for the first time.

Memorial Flags (continued on page 2)



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***Public is cordially invited to
attend the Annual
Korean War Memorial
Wreathlaying
to be held
Saturday, July 28, 2012
11:00 am
at the Washington State
Korean War Veterans Memorial
in Olympia.***

Memorial Flags (continued from page 1)

The Reverend Dr. Francis Jeffery provided the invocation.

"... We give honor and respect to those who have given of their blood, their body and sometimes their minds. So also, some have lost their souls as well due to the ravages of our wars..."

As the flags were raised, saxophone player Darren Motamedy offered a beautiful version of our National Anthem. The Washington National Guard Color Guard was joined by Vietnam Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club member 'Coaster' who raised the POW/MIA Flag.

Lt Col Dick Merchant (USA Ret.) offered remarks during the ceremony. Lt Col Merchant served two tours of duty in Vietnam, including service in the Ia Drang Valley during the 1965 battle made famous by the book and movie, We Were Soldiers Once and Young.

Following Lt Col Merchant, the Vietnam Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club placed a wreath at the Wall to honor all who had fallen or had been held as Prisoners of War.

Guests received a helicopter salute from a UH-1D 'Huey'. This U.S. Army helicopter was part of A-Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division and was in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969. Our thanks goes to Brian Reynolds, President of the Olympic Flight Museum for his generous donation of this helicopter for the ceremony.



WDVA Director John Lee was then introduced and offered special thanks to each of the veterans in attendance for their commitment to our current war veterans.

"It was you, Vietnam Veterans, who stepped up and made sure we were ready, not only with the words Welcome Home, but with the support we knew these veterans would need."



John then presented all Vietnam Veterans and those representing Vietnam Veterans with a special challenge coin, made in partnership with Coin Force. The coin was offered in appreciation for their service and in recognition of the 25th Anniversary of the Memorial, and includes the words "Welcome Home".



The ceremony concluded with the Tacoma Scots playing Amazing Grace and Bob MacKenzie playing Taps.



Watch Flagraising on WDVA Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=3542646802474&set=vb.157561335628&type=2&theater>



A Note from John

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) recently received confirmation we have been awarded \$650,000 from the Corporation for National and Community Service to continue the Vet Corps program.

The Vet Corps is an AmeriCorps program which began in 2009 in partnership with the Washington Commission for National and Community Service. Its focus is on helping veterans navigate Washington's college and university campuses. Vet Corps members act as on-campus guides for student veterans and provide practical advice and assistance to resources both on and off-campus.

Last year Vet Corps members were in contact with over 3,000 veterans, active duty members or their families. Vet Corps members provided referrals to community resources, and ultimately helped keep students on track so they could take advantage of their GI Bill education benefits. Veterans are a dedicated and determined group of individuals and this program serves as a guide, a resource and sometimes even a safety-net if the transition from servicemember to college student doesn't go as smoothly as it should.

The new grant funds fifty full-time Vet Corps members at colleges and universities throughout Washington State. Vet Corps members receive a monthly stipend of \$1,210 and a \$5,550 education voucher at the end of the term, which runs from September 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

In addition to their college responsibilities, Vet Corps members are investing in their communities by participating in quarterly community service projects. Last year, over 1,000 hours were donated in communities throughout the state. Projects range from a monthly movie night at the Ronald McDonald House, to habitat restoration projects and home building or remodeling projects with Habitat for Humanity or Rebuilding Together.



For veteran students who would like to find out if your school has a Vet Corps member, contact Program Manager Mark Fischer at markf@dva.wa.gov.

For businesses or community organizations interested in getting involved, contact Mark Fischer at markf@dva.wa.gov to find out how you can help. ***Your business or organization could provide a pizza night for a Campus Veterans Club, or give the Vet Corps ideas for local community service projects.***

Many of Washington's Colleges and Universities are now listed as Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses. This means faculty and administrators have undergone veteran cultural competency training and the school has a supportive veterans program in place. More information on the Partners Program is available at: http://www.dva.wa.gov/veteran_campuses.html



WDVA Director



Brigadoon Service Dog Program at CCCC Proudly Showcases “BODIE”



With the help and patient training of Dog Handlers Thurman Sherrill and Don Glaude, Bodie has left Cedar Creek Corrections Center to finish his training at Orting. He will soon be placed with a veteran who will benefit from Bodie's kind and gentle demeanor.

Congratulations to our first graduate!

A new program at [Cedar Creek Corrections Center](#) has offenders train dogs that will eventually serve as therapy-service animals for local Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.

The program is a partnership between Cedar Creek, [Brigadoon Service Dogs](#) in Bellingham and the [Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

Brigadoon identifies puppies that are good candidates for therapy-service dogs and takes them to Cedar Creek where offenders provide the dogs with foundational training,

such as how to obey orders and basic behavior training.



Brigadoon Kennel then completes the training and provides the service dogs to veterans who need help with mobility or with post-traumatic stress disorder.



Butch Ayala stands guard at the Washington State World War II Memorial in Olympia, WA. from dawn until noon during Memorial Day Weekend. <http://www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/ww2/ww2.htm>

Ayala is a member of the "Friends of Willie & Joe" living history group that mostly depicts the regular "dog face" infantryman of WWII, usually as members of Bill Mauldin's 45th Division but also as various other units including the 101st and 82nd Airborne.

The bronze plaque attached to the seating wall next to Ayala is shown enlarged below and bears the names of 44 of the 5,847 Washington KIA that were not included on the five bronze leaves of the Memorial.

"Thank you" Butch Ayala and "Thank You" to the "Friends of Willie & Joe"!

<http://www.angelfire.com/wa2/FJ6/Friends.html>





THE VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT OF 2011



NEW BENEFITS FOR UNEMPLOYED VETERANS

VETERANS MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL EDUCATION BENEFITS

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) offers up to 12 months of retraining assistance to Veterans who meet all the following criteria:

- Unemployed
- At least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not eligible for any other VA education benefit programs (e.g., the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- Not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (IU)
- Not enrolled in a federal or state job training program

We are accepting VRAP applications now for programs that begin on or after July 1, 2012. [Please visit eBenefits to apply.](#) Participating Veterans may receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the full-time Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty rate, currently \$1,473 per month. Assistance under this benefit program ends on March 31, 2014.

Programs must meet the following criteria to qualify for VRAP benefits:

- Be offered by a community college or technical school
- Lead to an Associates Degree or Certificate
- Train the Veteran for a high demand occupation

UNEMPLOYED VETERANS WITH A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

To qualify, Veterans must:

- Have previously completed a VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program
- Apply within six months of exhausting initial claim for unemployment compensation
- Apply to VA by March 31, 2014

VA offers incentive payments to encourage employers to hire and train program participants.

- Veterans must apply and qualify for VA vocational rehabilitation benefits prior to being hired
- VA may reimburse up to one-half the Veterans annual salary for 6 months or longer
- Gives Veterans a competitive advantage with employers

****For more information on these great benefits and how to apply, please visit us online at www.benefits.va.gov/VOW or call toll free at 1-800-827-1000.**

Please continue to check www.va.gov for changes and updates to the VOW to Hire Hero Act programs and benefits. Last updated on 05/11/2012



U.S. Department
of Labor



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Raffle Returns!

January 21 - March 5, 2013

What can you win?

- One lucky winner will walk away with \$1 million!

PRIZE CHART	
1	\$1 MILLION TOP PRIZE
30	\$1,000 PRIZES
100	\$100 PRIZES

- Only 200,000 raffle tickets will be available.

How does it work?

Money raised by the Veterans Raffle helps returning veterans through the Veterans Innovations Program (VIP), run by the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

How does it help returning veterans?

The VIP helps National Guard, Reserve, and veterans who served on Active Duty and their families. These brave men and women have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.

Long deployments and separations from families and careers can take their toll, but the VIP helps by finding solutions to their unique situations. The VIP helps each veteran and family find a path to stability and can include education, training, employment, medical care, and counseling.

Why a Veterans Raffle?

The VIP started serving veterans in 2007 and was supported by state funding. But a lack of additional state funds meant that VIP would be unable to continue its important work. Our first Veterans Raffle allowed us to continue serving veterans and their families and we look forward to the 2013 Raffle being even more successful!



Overall odds of the Veterans Raffle are 1 in 1.53 thousands. Must be 18 to purchase.



Luckie Joe Boyd(left), Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR) for Suquamish Tribe and Frank Cordero(right), Suquamish tribal member and former TVR for Lummi Nation presented Alex Deluao(center),WDVA retired Service Center Manager with a blanket for his work assisting Native American veterans and their families.

The presentation was made prior to the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (VA-OTGR) Western Region Conference hosted by the Kalispel Tribe at the Northern Quest Resort & Casino. Special guests included Stephanie Birdwell, Director VA-OTGR, Terry Bently, Tribal Government Relations Specialist for the Western Region with VA-OTGR, and David Elizalde, Director of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. The second training will be in Grand Ronde, OR on July 10-11.

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/PDF%20files/events/2012OTGRJuly.pdf>



On Sunday, May 13th, 2012, the Seattle University Army ROTC placed 2,000 roses from the "Ten Grands" concert at gravesites at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Evergreen Washelli Memorial Park.

The roses were a gift from The Snowman Foundation and "Ten Grands" Seattle. They were first used on stage at the 5th annual "Ten Grands" concert at Benaroya Hall the previous evening. Visit the Washelli blog for KOMO news video of 2,000 Roses Honored Veterans <http://www.washelli.com/wordpress/>

The Pierce County Marine Veterans (PCMARVETS) is a new, nonprofit organization created in partnership with American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 1 in Tacoma to assist veterans in filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

PC Marvets Board Chairman Kelley Byers and Service Office Erica Westling stopped by WDVA headquarters in Olympia to show us their Mobile Veterans Service Office -

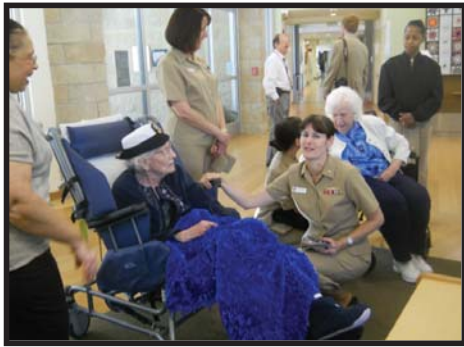
For more information on the program, and for schedules and dates please visit

<http://www.pcmavets.com> or call the VSO at (253) 468-4724 or Hight at (253) 283-1712 and Byers at (253) 283-2046.





May 7-11th was National Nurse appreciation week. To honor our veterans who have served as nurses in the military, Nursing staff from Navy Hospital Bremerton, including Director of Nursing Captain Boenke, visited Washington Veterans Home. Our guests escorted our residents to the main dining room for dinner and enjoyed an afternoon visiting and reminiscing.



Crewmembers from the USS Ronald Reagan supported the WDVA Vision statement to Honor veterans in their final resting place with a community service project. On Friday, May 11th the command representatives worked gardening, weeding and grounds



clean up in preparation for Memorial day programs at the end of the month.



The USS Stennis has an ongoing program to support and visit the Veterans at the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil.

May 10th, a group of 15 crewmembers, including Commanding Officer Captain Ronald Reis, came to celebrate resident birthdays for May.

The sailors assisted with bingo and the monthly prize auction. Capt. Reis even took a turn at the bingo table calling a game for the residents.

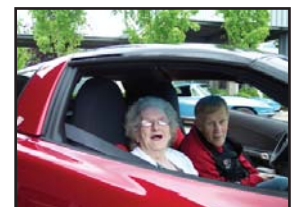
To make our day even more of a celebration, the new Mayor of Port Orchard, Tim Matthes, joined the USS Stennis for the day at Retsil.

Pictured here is Superintendent Don Veverka accepting a commemorative ships picture from Capt. Reis with Mayor Tim Matthes.



The Glass Odyssey Corvette Club didn't let a little rain dampen their day as they met a bus load of WVH residents at A & W for root beer floats the first weekend of June.

Then it was on to the Retsil campus, where they spent two hours taking residents for rides and gave them plenty of time to admire their "special babies". What is it about fast, shiny cars that brings out a smile in everyone?



The 2012 Annual Fishing Derby at the Soldiers Home was another huge success, thanks to the Tacoma HOGS Group.



Look at all the beautiful new fishing poles the Tacoma HOGS Group donated to the Washington Soldiers Home! Some of the group came out earlier in the week to make sure all the equipment was ready for the big day.



Thanks to Mick Pier for sharing this wonderful photo of the Tacoma HOG Group and Washington Soldiers Home staff at the end of another perfect Fishing Derby in Orting.





The Spokane Veterans Home represents the lives of our most precious dreamers of the past century.

It is home to our military veterans from WWII, Korea and Vietnam.



Their Dreams of Freedom are the legacy that allows all of us to Reach for the Stars.

It was a fitting tribute for our residents to be a part of the 74th Armed Forces Torchlight Parade sponsored by the Spokane Lilac Festival on May 19, 2012, with this year's theme ***"Dream and Reach for the Stars"***.



The Spokane Veterans Home Pergola is getting the additional enhancement of lots of concrete for easy access for our residents.

The Combat Vets Motorcycle Association Chapters 11-2 and 11-3 have been working long hours with the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' Training and Apprenticeship program to add the improvements. Thanks to everyone!



Thanks so much to the VFW Aux. in Spokane for making Mothers Day special for our residents!



The Spokane Chapter of the American Legion Riders Post 9 took time to provide a special BBQ and friendship to residents at the Spokane Veterans Home.



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For additional information, please call 1-877-838-7787
or visit http://www.dva.wa.gov/washington_state_veterans_homes.html



**Attention all Korean War Veterans!!!
Order your Official DOD Recognition
Certificate!**

<http://koreanwar.defense.gov/recognition.html>

**Public is cordially invited to attend the
Annual Korean War Memorial Wreathlaying
to be held**

Saturday, July 28, 2012

11:00 am

at the

**Washington State Korean War Veterans Memorial
in Olympia.**

1-800-562-0132 opt 1



Jennette Milks and her daughter were at William Wiley Elementary School in West Richland for their Veterans Day assembly when photographed by Heather Villa, a freelance journalist in the Tri-Cities area.

Read Heather's account of the day on the WDVA Blog at:

<http://wsdva.blogspot.com/>

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<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=wdva&A=1>

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